



# Depression

## Fact Sheet

### Definition

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Depression (Major Depressive Disorder) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working.

### Signs & Symptoms

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- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

### Treatment

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Treatment can include medication (antidepressants), which can take 2-4 weeks to start working. Therapy is also beneficial and the best approach is often a combination of therapy and medication.

### Myths & Facts

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**Myth:** Depression isn’t a real illness.

**Fact:** Many believe that depression is just sadness or even weakness, but depression is a complex mental health disorder which has social, psychological, and biological origins.

**Myth:** You can just snap out of it.

**Fact:** No one chooses to be depressed. It is not a sign of self-pity, weakness, or laziness.

**Myth:** Antidepressants will change your personality.

**Fact:** Antidepressants do change your brain chemistry, but many people who take them start to feel like themselves again.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

<http://www.healthline.com/health-slideshow/9-myths-depression#1>

